

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 MCT-01 SSM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2499
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEHBASSY CAIRO
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 2147

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SY, PLO
SUBJECT: PALESTINIAN DEVELOPMENTS

REF: CAIRO 4798

1. SUMMARY:

YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR IN DAMASCUS HAS DEBRIEFED LEADING
DELEGATES TO RECENT PNC CONFERENCE. THEY STRESSED MARKED
TREND TOWARDS MODERATION OF PREVIOUS PNC POSITIONS AND
BROADENED AUTHORITY GIVEN TO EXCOMM AND ARAFAT. THE 15
POINTS REPRESENT A NEW "ACTIONPROGRAM" LEAVING BEHIND THE
PLO NATIONAL COVENANT BUT EVEN THESE POINTS
WILL NOT LIMIT AUTHORITY OF NEW EXCOMM AND ARAFAT. PNC
REAFFIRMED STAND THAT PLO WILL NOT PLAY ONE ARAB STATE
OFF AGAINST ANOTHER. ARAFAT PERSONALLY DID HIS BEST TO
SATISFY SYRIAN INTERESTS AT THE CAIRO SESSION. PLO "FOREIGN
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MINISTER" KADDUMI TOLD YUGOSLAVS PRIOR TO PNC THAT IF MOSCOW
AND WASHINGTON GUARANTEE PEACE SETTLEMENT WILL INCLUDE
ESTABLISHMENT OF WEST BANK/GAZA STATE, PLO WILL NOT NEED
ATTEND GENEVA. END SUMMARY.

2. YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR PEKIC HAS DISCUSSED RESULTS OF PNC
CONFERENCE WITH SEVERAL DELEGATES WHO HAVE NOW RETURNED TO DAMASCUS

INCLUDING KHALID FAHOUM, ABU MAYZAR, ABU MAZIN AND ABU MAHIR. THEY ADVISED HIM THAT THEIR FIRST TASK WILL BE TO AGREE ON DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITIES AMONG THE NEWLY ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE PLO EXCOMM. THEN, WITHIN APPROXIMATELY ONE WEEK, THE EXCOMM WILL ELECT A NEW CENTRAL COUNCIL, (BOTH TASKS SHOULD HAVE BEEN ACCOMPLISHED DURING THE PNC SESSIONS BUT TIME DID NOT PERMIT.) REPRESENTATION ON THE NEW CENTRAL COUNCIL WILL BE PROPORTIONAL TO REPRESENTATION ON THE EXCOMM.

3. PEKIC SAID THAT ALL DELEGATES WITH WHOM HE HAD REVIEWED PNC PROCEEDINGS STRESSED ITS MARKED TREND TOWARDS MODERATION IF PREVIOUS PNC POSITIONS AND THE BROADER AUTHORITY GIVEN TO THE EXCOMM AND ARAFAT PERSONALLY. I SAID WE HAD HEARD IN CAIRO OF A CONFIDENTIAL PNC DOCUMENT WHICH BROADENED THE EXCOMM MANDATE. PEKIC REPLIED HE PERSONALLY HAD HEARD OF NO SUCH DOCUMENT AND THAT PERHAPS THE IMPORTANCE OF ANY SO-CALLED CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT SHOULD NOT BE OVERSTRESSED. THE DELEGATES HAD SPOKEN MORE GENERALLY TO HIM OF A PNC "CONSENSUS" TO INCREASE THE EXCOMM'S AUTHORITY. THEY REFERRED TO THE PNC'S NATIONAL COVENANT AS A "HISTORICAL DOCUMENT" APPROPRIATE TO 1974 CONDITIONS WHILE THE NEWLY ADOPTED 15 POINTS WERE AN "ACTION PROGRAM." THE MOST IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT, HOWEVER, THEY STRESSED IS THAT THE AUTHORITY OF THE NEW EXCOMM AND ARAFAT WOULD NOT BE LIMITED BY THE 15 POINTS.

4. THE DELEGATES HAD ALSO SPOKEN TO HIM ABOUT THE NEW EMPHASIS ON POLITICAL ACTION BY THE PLO. THIS DID NOT RULE OUT FEDAYEEN ACTION BUT ANY SUCH ACTIONS WOULD BE ORGANIZED CONFIDENTIAL

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FROM RESOURCES WITHIN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND ISRAEL. THEY ASSERTED NO FEDAYEEN ACTION WOULD BE INSTIGATED FROM OUTSIDE. DELEGATES SAID THEY WERE PARTICULARLY ENCOURAGED BY THE EXPLICIT SUPPORT RECEIVED AT THE CONFERENCE FROM GAZA AND WEST BANK LEADERS; ALL OF THE MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES ADDRESSED LETTERS TO THE PNC EXPLICITLY RECOGNIZING THE PLO'S AUTHORITY. THESE LETTERS WERE OFFICIALLY SIGNED AND STAMPED. THIS HAD CONTRIBUTED TO A MARKED INCREASE IN THE PLO'S SELF-CONFIDENCE.

5. RELATIONS WITH SYRIA, EGYPT AND JORDAN:

THE PNC REITERATED ITS ADHERENCE TO THE STAND ANNOUNCED BY THE CENTRAL COUNCIL LAST DECEMBER THAT THE PLO WOULD NOT INDULGE IN PLAYING EGYPT AND SYRIA OFF AGAINST ONE ANOTHER BUT GIVE EQUAL IMPORTANCE TO BOTH. AS FAR AS JORDAN WAS CONCERNED, PEKIC WAS TOLD THAT THERE WOULD BE A FURTHER PLO DELEGATION VISITING AMMAN DURING THE COURSE OF THE COMING WEEK.

6. ARAFAT BY ALL ACCOUNTS DID HIS BEST TO SATISFY SYRIA AT THE PNC. ANY DELEGATE WHO SPOKE UP CRITICIZING SYRIA WAS IMMEDIATELY OPPOSED BY ARAFAT. ARAFAT "IMPOSED" THE REELECTION OF FAHHOUM, ONE OF SYRIA'S FAVORITE PALESTINIAN LEADERS. ARAFAT ALSO TOOK ISSUE WITH THE FLOOD OF LETTERS RECEIVED BY THE PNC CRITICAL OF SYRIA AND SAIQA. HE LET IT BE KNOWN THAT HE CONSIDERED THIS LETTER WRITING TO BE A CAMPAIGN ORGANIZED BY IRAQI EMBASSIES IN EUROPE.

7. SINCE HIS RETURN, FAHHOUM HAS MET WITH BAATH PARTY DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL AHMAR, WITH FONMIN KHADDAM AND FINALLY WITH PRESIDENT ASAD. THESE MEETINGS WERE PREPARATORY TO THE MARCH 31 SESSION BETWEEN ARAFAT AND ASAD. (SYRIAN RADIO APRIL 1 STRESSED THAT ARAFAT-ASAD MEETING HAD EMPHASIZED THE "STRATEGIC RELATIONS" BETWEEN THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION AND SYRIA.)

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8. PLO ATTITUDES TOWARDS USG:

PEKIC SAID HE HAS AS YET RECEIVED NO FIRM INFORMATION ON WHAT ARAFAT AND KADDUMI HAD DISCUSSED WITH SADAT IN CONNECTION WITH EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON.

KADDUMI, HE NOTED, HAD NOT VISITED SYRIA SINCE THE PNC AND HE, PEKIC, HAS NOT YET HAD A CHANCE TO TALK WITH ARAFAT. PEKIC RECALLED, HOWEVER, KADDUMI'S STATEMENT TO YUGOSLAV FONMIN MINIC IN FEBRUARY THAT IF THE TWO SUPER POWERS GUARANTEE AN ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE SETTLEMENT WILL INCLUDE ESTABLISHMENT OF A WEST BANK/GAZA STATE FOR THE PALESTINIANS, THERE WILL BE NO NEED FOR THE PLO TO ATTEND GENEVA.

MURPHY

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